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E S S A Y
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W O M A N,
A
P O E M.

By S. JOHNSON, A. B.

*To raise the virtues, and mate the bliss,
And sweeten all the toils of human life;
This be the female dignity, and praise.*

THOMSON.

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M DCC LXXII.

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Divine CALISTA heaven in pity gave
 To smoothe his passage to the silent grave:
 How sweet those moments, when the infant maid
 Played round his knees, and prattled as she played!
 Sweet were those moments, when her filial hand
 With pious care life's dying taper fanned;
 Soft his last sigh, when all his troubles o'er,
 The good ANSELMO bowed, and sigh'd no more.

Hail, matchless maid!----can earth afford a sight,
 Which gives to men and angels more delight;
 More grateful to the God of heaven, whose eye
 Views all his works with kind complacency?
 Is there a sight more amiable on earth
 Than such exalted proof of female worth?
 Yes, one there may be----find it they who can,
 (As yet unfound) a faultless finished man.

'Tis not enough to breathe the vital air,
 To boast of gifts, which brutes in common share;
 Eat, drink and sleep, to propagate our race,
 And differ only in an upright face;

With

With souls supinely poring on the ground,
 To walk through life one dull insipid round;
 Look through creation with regardless eye,
 Nor catch one feature of the deity.

Man with the principles of life received
 (Winnowed by time, if truth may be believed)
 A soul for action, prompted by a will,
 That learnt from reason's lore both good and ill:
 Yet, far from good, by folly blindly led,
 He grasped at shadows, while the substance fled;
 To conscience deaf, creation's awful voice,
 He grossly err'd,—for erron was his choice.

Still highly blest (their proper task assigned)
 With noblest gifts of body and of mind,
 Man, thankless man, ingratitude's worst slave,
 Receives, enjoys, then spurns the hand that gave.

Oh, curst ingratitude! beneath thy name
 A legion of infernal spirits came.

In league with satan, tutored at his nod
 To set weak man at variance with his God:
 That tongue, which should proclaim his maker's praise,
 Bids proud defiance, and contempt displays:
 That hand, which should the grateful theme prolong,
 Pens against heaven a satire or a song;
 Mocks at his blessings, censures most the best;
 Makes love a proverb, woman a worn jest.

Too long, ungenerous humour, much too long
 Hath woman been the burden of thy song;
 Her every beauty blasted with a touch;
 Her failings fancied high, and fashioned such;
 Her charms all shadow, and confined to form;
 Her soul all passion, passions all a storm;
 Fond thro' caprice, and but for moments pleased,
 Provoked, a fiend for ages unappeased:-----
 Unworthy picture! such as truth disdains;
 Such as each hand, that draws it, justly stains.

When bold detraction points the piercing rhymes,
 Deep sounds the lyre, and jars to after times;

While

While praise is whispered in a still soft note,
Scarce heard to day, to morrow clean forgot.

In these high-pampered days, when bold divorce
Mocks the plain matron wedlock, and her course
Maintains in honour's and in pride's despite,
Or only proud to do the deeds of night
In day's broad glare;---lays her lascivious head
On rank adultery's lap, and looks shame dead.

In these high-pampered days, when sickly taste
Loathes wit's delicious banquet, though 'tis graced
By elegance' own hand; nor deigns to eat,
If simple truth serve up the unfavoury treat;
A nicer cook she asks, on prose or rhymes
Who largely throws the *Cayenne* of the times:
Her palate asks the strong, the poignant zest
Of defamation; *-----* hits it best:
Falshood directs the feast, while libel carves;
And both grow fat, while poor encomium starves.
POPE had been damned,---been blasted CHURCHILL's bays,
Had CHURCHILL bent his stubborn hand to praise;

Had they forsaken satire's rapid theme,
 To float on panegyrick's gentle stream,
 "Perish the pen, and blistered be the tongue,
 On which aspersions of the fair is hung!
 Too much they smart from each false witty friend,
 Who stabs that softness, honour bids defend.
 Blest, might I consecrate, to candour true,
 One manly lay to female merit due;
 No more should fell detraction pour her spleen,
 To ruffle modesty's engaging mien;
 To force the tear from beauty's pensive eye,
 And blast the virgin-rose with calumny:
 No longer should, on slander's blackest plan,
Essays on woman fling disgrace on man."

Far hence be envy, and her hateful train,
 From other's happiness deriving pain!
 Hence far hypocrisy, with hand and eye,
 Turned up in pious insult to the sky!
 Nor thou, base flattery, mar these honest lays;
 Then wounding most, when most thou meanst to praise:
 Truth,

Truth guide my hand---on candour's upright plan
To justify a woman's ways to man.

My theme is woman---smile ye British fair,
And hear (not hired to pray) a parson's prayer:

" If e'er I wronged, or ever sought to wrong

" Your lovely sex, if e'er my hand or tongue

" Rebellious to my heart, paused to fulfil

" (Oh, were the power but equal to the will!)

" Your dear behests, if e'er my soul untrue

" And false to nature, became false to you;

" Blind to your merit, if your errors viewed,

" I held them forth in blazoned magnitude;

" If I not saw them with a partial eye

" Dwindle to foibles, and then passed them by,

" May woman scorn me; may I banished live

" Unknown, unfelt those joys her smiles can give:

" Yes, may my wife---(nay, start not, Critick!) grind

" To the first knave, that aims to taint her mind;

" That honest mind, where I delighted see,

" What the best are, what all should aim to be."

My

My theme is woman---nor let malice deem,
 That sneaking interest pointed out the theme:
 No, my eye saw, my heart partook their wrong,
 And bade my hand essay the generous song.

Gods! I had rather win that honest fame,
 Which bleeding virtue's advocate may claim;
 Shield her fair form from slander's fide-long blow,
 And teach one rebel-rake her worth to know;
 Than clad in satire's terrors, see a throng
 Of knaves and blockheads tremble at my song;
 With abject eye await the impending stroke,
 And court that hand their folly did provoke:
 Great tho' the joy, yet greater to defend
 The injured, and be female merit's friend.

Woman's my theme---nor let misprision think
 If all unequal to the task I sink,
 The subject, as the bard, alike to blame;
 Their's be the triumph, mine be all the shame.

Woman

Woman I sing---without whose faithful aid
 Life were a blank, and all its joys a shade;
 Heaven's last best gift---Man, destitute of this,
 Wandered forlorn, and sigh'd in scenes of bliss;
 Call her not source of woe, fair fount of shame;
 Nor worth unweighed, her slightest errors blame;
 If man's prime curse arose from woman's sin,
 Remember, 'twas the devil drew her in;
 Strong as thou art, thy strength had Satan tried,
 His guile had triumphed o'er thy reason's pride
 When man's defects dishonour manhood's name,
 Shall we in woman's imperfection blame?
 Say she is weak---that weakness is our pride,
 It calls our guardian manhood to her side:
 Caprice unknown, and undebauched by whim,
 When affectation mars not one fine limb,
 Mars not one feature---when pathetick grace
 Springs from the soul, and animates the face,
 Fear then is delicacy, softness sense;
 And weakness is her strongest best defence.

Tho' some have erred, and others still may err;
 Yet let not shallow prejudice aver,
 That none have merit---let not censure fall,
 Because a few are faulty, on them all:
 Show me one woman false, I'll show you ten
 More false, more faulty, more abandoned men.

Scandal may say (for once perhaps say true)
 Vice hath her female votaries not a few;
 May point out Lady FRANCES, Lady PEN,
 Almost as vicious as their own good Men:
 I grant you this, and blush to think they are;
 Yet among these, the instances are rare,
 When from the spouse the error don't take rise,
 Tho' what in him be sport, in her is vice.

My Lord's sole business is to game and whore;
 Why from his Lady then expect much more?
 Not with her person, but her purse-strings caught,
 With love's engaging language he ne'er fought,
 With sense, or sensibility refined,
 To touch the softness of his Lady's mind:

Her

Her maiden treasure, as her maiden dower,
Possessed, laid waste, forgotten in an hour.

A husband's baseness, brutal and unkind;
Preys on the fond affectioned female mind;
The pang, that injured delicacy feels,
Confirms the tyrant, and his heart new steels;
The tear, that flows from beauty's pensive eye,
Instead of pity moves his mockery.

It's true, the callous GILTONS again,
Long versed, long hackneyed in the ways of men,
Has no such failings, no such fainting qualms;
She reasons well, and well her passion calms.
"Of vows, of horns, nor mindful, nor afraid,
"Let my Lord frolick with my chambermaid;
"I'll take his footman, in good humour he,
"And frolick full as pleasantly as he."

For one, like this, what numbers vainly moan—
Through sensibility, too much their own.

Unhappy

Unhappy PHILOMENE, whose young mind
 Ne'er had a thought, but such as taste refined;
 On whose fair form, so delicate her sense,
 Zephyr might scarcely breathe without offence;
 In some weak hour, all lavish of her charms,
 Gave them a prey to *Julius* MIDAS' arms;
 MIDAS, nor let my hand refuse to draw
 Vice fed by age, and injury by law;
 In form a CALIBAN, in all beside
 A compound strange of dirtiness and pride;
 His taste and breeding, just enough to show
 Scorn for good manners, and to damn a beau;
 His learning, brother dunces to deride,
 And make dull self ridiculous by pride;
 His maxim, that the rich do always right;
Mammon his God, his gospel, appetite:
 In publick, every finner's to be curst,
 In private, to sin deeper than the worst;
 " Clap drunkards in the stocks, let whoredom too
 " By fines and penance all his guilt undo;
 " Flog those young strumpets well, or stay,—d'ye see,
 " Bring me that modest-looking girl at three;

" I'd fain do something for her, tell the wench,

" She must be all submission to the bench."

MIDAS, with reverence to his worship's coat,

By somewhat led, which stimulates the goat,

Held hapless PHILOMEDE four long years

In fruitless sighs, and penitential tears;

Four years his brutal lust the ruffian fed,

Then kindly banished from his beastly bed;

Yet, ruffian-like, pursued with hellish hate

And slander, false as hell, his banished mate.

In friendship's whitest mask, and holiest men,

(Useful in such a holy work I ween)

CALVIN, the pious CALVIN for vile ends

Seduced from virtue, and her virtuous friends,

Poor AMARYLLIS; that unpractised maid

Too innocent to doubt, too soon betrayed,

Loving believed, believing was undone:

What could she do? Ah, what would you have done!

Her friends unkind, her lover faithless found,

The world less apt to pity than to wound;

To law she flew---law made the fair a bride,
 And gave that justice, CALVIN's heart denied;
 But gave not peace---no more the jocund plays
 The AMARYLLIS of her former days;
 Can lambkins play beneath the butcher's knife?
 Can AMARYLLIS smile when CALVIN's wife?
 Alas, how changed! nor months, nor years remove
 The piercing pang of injured hopeless love:
 Like some fair flower, beneath inclement skies,
 Lost on the desert air, her perfume dies.

Learn hence, ye fair, to shun a guilty flame,
 Nor wed a monster to secure your fame;
 Rather to deserts fly---(let rocks and stones
 Witness your griefs, and echo back your groans.)
 Than live with brutal tyranny a slave:
 Old time shall heal the wounds, young treachery gave.

SIR FOPPLING FLUTTER, brisk and debonaire,
 Has too much spirit to admire the fair;
 Each blushing innocent, each sprightly fool
 Smarts the sad subject of his ridicule;

His

His flippant tongue with pretty insolence
 Criticks their figures, and arraigns their sense;
 Unhurt by beauty, and secure from wit,
 FLUTTER was born to vanquish, not submit:

Surly IAGO, formed of such coarse clay,
 As nature in disgust had thrown away;
 Hates the whole sex, assumes the critick's tone;
 Damns all their follies, and displays his own:

The lovely maid, whom nature's finest touch
 Adorned so highly, more had been too much;
 Whose mind all artless, all devoid of guile,
 Laughs in each feature, sparkles in each smile;
 She too, whose beauty beams a milder ray,
 Whose pensive sweetness steals the soul away;
 She, whose attractions, while they seem to shun,
 Secure those conquests that her beauty won;
 Whose blushes breathe that speechless eloquence,
 Which gives to force of charms the charm of sense;
 Must fall a martyr to his slanderous tongue,
 "Never did right"—who never yet did wrong:

"Phaw!

" Pshaw! 'tis mere artifice; they all are bad,
 " The witty wanton, and the gay are mad,
 " The grave intriguing, and the church-going dame
 " Veils with religion's mask the deed of shame:
 " Bring to the proof---the chafest, you can find,
 " Behind night's fable curtain will be kind. "

Peace, profane wretch! Be this thy constant curse
 To think all faulty, and to find some worse;
 Dead to that nameless, that bewitching grace,
 Which charms in FLAVIA spite of FLAVIA's face,
 May never thy dark soul, averse to day,
 From female worth admit one chearful ray;
 Each gloomy thought attain one black event,
 Spring from disgust, and die in discontent.

The man, whom love's soft musick cannot fire,
 (In sweetest unison when young desire
 Plays on the pulse, and vibrates to the heart)
 Is formed to act some truly treacherous part;
 What manhood shudders at, some damned thing;
 His country sell, assassinate his king:

Trust

Trust no such villain; dead, O Love, to thee,
Let him be banished from society.

The callous wretch, who views with equal eye
Beauty's keen glance, and foul deformity;
Views STELLA's worth, which, of superior kind,
Gives form expression, and adds grace to mind;
Makes beauty useless, vain the pride of dress,
Where art is nature, nature loveliness;
Whose eye, the sweet interpreter of sense,
Beams the soft language of benevolence:

Alike untouched, if ARABELLA move,
Circled by every little laughing love,
Born of her smiles, and playing round her waist,
That seat of elegance, that soul of taste;
Or, if GANGRILLA's frozen frame advance,
Dragging her lank limbs through a lifeless dance:

Untouched, if EMMA, beauteous EMMA shine,
The living portrait of a hand divine;
Where delicacy fills the finished whole,
Softens each passion, and subdues the soul;

Where shape is sense, where dignity is ease;
 The wretch, whom such perfection cannot please,
 Nature abhors;---a man but half confest,
 A shade---the ne'er stamped man upon his breast.

There are of happier mold, whom nature loves,
 And sympathick to her touch approves;
 Who feel, unfettered from the golden chain,
 (Like STERNE) a gloomy interval of pain:
 Whose honest souls expand at woman's name;
 Catch from OPHELIA poor OPHELIA's flame;
 Suffer in DESDEMONA's deadly scene;
 Or softened, sigh with injured IMOGEN.

Oh, matchless SHAKESPEARE! thine it was to know
 The worth of woman, and the joys that flow
 From her soft excellence; 'twas thine to tell
 Those charms, which none shall ever draw so well:
 Lectures, like thine, pierce every mortal part;
 Strike at the head, and never miss the heart;
 Chastize the passions, and exalt the sense
 To noblest deeds of high beneficence;

Throw

Throw open bounty's hospitable door;
 To clothe the naked, feed the hungry poor;
 Teach yet delight, nor half so soon forgot,
 As ten dull preachments on--*the Lord knows what.*

View woman's merit in domestick life;
 Nor blush to find that merit in a wife:
 Needless it is on such pursuit to roam;
 Confine the view; the treasure is at home.

Hath pride's oppressive arm the morsel ta'en
 From thy poor children, all thy labour's gain;
 Hath fortune fled thee at thy greatest need;
 And sent an alien on thy flock to feed;

Hovering with raven-pinions o'er thy head,
 Hath sickness stretched thee on her painful bed;
 In those sad hours, when anguish racks the joints,
 And conscience, every pang she fixes, points;
 When joy is madness, sense absurdity,
 With life disgusted, yet afraid to die;
 Hath no kind guardian angel stepped between
 Thy struggling soul and death;---at such a scene

Abashed,

Abashed, appalled---when, mirth and humour dead,
 Friends of thy healthful hours, all falsely fled;
 Hath no kind sister, no fond faithful wife
 Hung o'er thy fate, and trembled for thy life?
 In love's soft accent, pity's soothing strain
 Revived thy fainting soul, dispelled its pain;
 In each soft feature didst thou never know,
 Read in each look, a tendernefs of woe
 Surpassing man's rough heart? Didst never see
 Friendship divine in female sympathy
 Glow with thy joys, with thy distresses bleed?
 NO!----Then thy fate hath been severe indeed:
 Sleep on through life, unfinished as thou art,
 Unknown the first best feelings of the heart.

Sworn with false prowess, woman's power we brave
 Or vanquished bend her beauty's abject slave;
 Fashioned by fancy's ornamental hand,
 The fair with more than mortal sway command
 Our homage; straight, we raise them to the skies,
 Pour incense forth, bid holy altars rise;

Then

Then sick of worship, we apostates turn,
Throw down our idols, and their godhead spurn;
Abjure our plighted faith, and folly bit,
In modern blasphemy display our wit.

Prone to extreme, and ever proud to stray
From calm contentment's unfrequented way,
Man is at best a contradiction still;
Passion 'gainst reason, judgment against will:
Now LILIPUT is all his taste, and *that*
Is coarse, and *this* indelicately fat:
Lo, the next moment stranger whimsies seize,
Nothing but opposite excess can please:
"Give me, ye Gods, a BRODDIGNAGGIAN's charms!"
"And let a rich luxuriance fill my arms!"

When whim perverts the judgment, when the choice
Depends on humour's, not on reason's voice;
When knaves extol (where men of worth object)
And magnify, as beauty, gross defect;
When fools adore, what sense disdains to approve;
It may be passion, but it can't be love.

Sense ever cultivates with strictest care,
 What may embellish, yet exalt the fair;
 With exquisite address the aims to blend
 The elegant companion, faithful friend;
 Gives to man's ardent wish the accomplished fair,
 And life is robbed of more than half its care.

Joy of thy heart, and glory of thy head,
 Nursed on thy knees, and in thy bosom fed,
 For whom affection bore the toil of years,
 Hope's anxious care, and care's distracting fears,
Hath thine own child----(Forbid, indulgent heaven,
 That such a trial be to manhood given!)
Hath thine own child----the Russian's basest part,
 Stabbed with ingratitude a father's heart,
 A mother's too;----with shame, with sorrow wild,
 Her soul still hovering o'er the unnatural child,
 Crushed with the stroke, unequal to the form,
 She sinks into thine arms, a lifeless form;
 Speak to her griefs, dispel that deadly groan,
 By healing her afflictions, ease thine own:

She

She lives;---she yet preserves the golden tie;
 That binds mankind in heaven born charity:
 Reclaims the penitent, his course half run,
 Restores to life, and love a better son.

These are the soft sweet ecstasies of grief,
 On life's high-coloured canvas fine relief;
 The best instruction that to man is given
 To relish earth, yet raise his thoughts to heaven;
 The smiles of fortune dim the human sight,
 But when she frowns, we read ourselves aright.

Warmed by the fair, each storm we bravely meet,
 Drink fortune's bitterest cup, and think it sweet:
 Yes, 'tis from woman these high blessings flow,
 To her this fortitude of mind we owe;
 Yet her best fame unnoticed, or unknown
 Pass by, while to the clouds we lift our own.

Be silent, envy! Is it not enough,
 The best are made of perishable stuff;

The

The fairest fade ? why then curtail their day,
And hasten by detraction their decay ?

Go, view the tombs, where low in dust is laid
The young, the beautiful, the accomplished maid ;
Loft are those charms, which monarchs might adore,
Closed are those eyes, that bosom beats no more,
Cold is that fragrant lip, and mute that tongue,
On whose sweet melody enchantment hung :---
While pride is humbled, while affection's grieved,
Hear the muse faintly whisper,---*DAPHNE lived.*

Is she forgotten then ?---shall time's controul
With black and base oblivion stain my soul ?
No !---that loved image neither time nor place
Shall, while remembrance profits me, efface :
There still she lives, there each exalted charm
Which gave expression to that matchless form,
Wakes every thought, and wings them to the sky
In full assurance,---*DAPHNE cannot die.*

Woman,

Woman, let rapture dwell upon the name !
 Warm from the heart, and faithful to its flame,
 Let honour's hand portray the lovely line ;
 Where virtue speaks the workmanship divine !

See, good AMANDA, now no more a bride,
 Too soon the knot, that sacred love had tied,
 By death dissolved, in beauty's highest bloom
 Bends in soft anguish o'er ALPHONSO's tomb ;
 While memory brings afresh those scenes to view,
 Which winged with happiness too swiftly flew :
 In vain doth HYMEN woo the fair again,
 Levels a second pointed shaft in vain ;
 HENRY and EMMA her whole bosom share,
 The stripling comely, and the maiden fair ;
 In this AMANDA sees herself revive,
 In that ALPHONSO's manly graces live ;
 For both she lives :—and well the lovely pair
 Requite with gratitude a mother's care.

Where

Where shall we find such exemplary worth
Among the stronger prouder sons of earth?
See we not these, as passion blows the gale,
Down the swift tide of faithless pleasure sail?

Say, thou HIRSHURUS, was it kindly done,
Blind to the merit of so good a son,
Thyself now tottering on the verge of life,
To take the base NARCISSA for a wife?
Was it well done, obsequious to the pride,
And boundless avarice of so mean a bride,
To drive the noble youth abroad to roam,
And earn that bread, which thou deniedst at home?
Sinks not thy soul, when fame's fair annals tell,
How gallantly the blooming hero fell?

To baffle prejudice, and love create,
By strong example to give judgment weight,
Strike slander dumb, check envy's hateful rage,
History unfolds a plain tho' partial page:
Where, proudly noticed in her splendid line,
Heroes, male heroes, in succession shine:

(For

(For he, who farthest plunged in human blood,
 Upon the list of worthies highest stood)
 There, bursting from beneath time's awful shade,
 The worth of woman hath itself displayed.

When Rome's proud turrets trembled to their base,
 And liberty to lust of power gave place;
 When luxury sat guttling at the helm,
 And popular divisions rent the realm;
 The brave, that with her freedom lost his life,
 Won deathless fame, scarce known his braver wife.

Turn back the eye to Carthage' last sad scene,
 When slavish ASDRUBAL forsook his queen,
 Forsook his infants, and his few firm friends,
 To court the shame, that cowardice attends;
 To save his worthless life, and shun that flame,
 Which wrapt in immortality his dame.

Yet, why unfold the musty rolls of time,
 Merit's the growth of every age and clime;

Tho'

Tho' by a thousand forms the plant's oppress,
 And most, discovered in a female breast:
 Largely we censure, what we cannot love,
 What we should praise, we sparingly approve.

Various their virtues are, nor less their power
 In calm retirement's unmolested hour,
 When social converse baffles every ill,
 Gives life new relish, gilds the bitter pill;
 Or when affliction sends her weeping train
 With all the fatal family of pain;
 When man's soul sickens;----when, with gloom o'ercast,
 His jaundiced eye broods o'er the bitter past,
 Anticipates the future;---lost in care,
 When hope is blasted by the fiend despair;
 Love intervenes to smoothe the rugged scene;
 What ill can wound, when love shall intervene?

Let us not then against the sex inveigh,
 But merit with their failings fairly weigh;
 We censure woman for caprice and pride,
 Hath man no foibles justice may deride?

Look

Look through him well with truth's impartial eyes,
 Follies he hath, and of a larger size;
 That, which dishonours one, brings shame on both;
 Folly was ne'er confined to female growth.

Of many, that come rushing to our view,
 To give but one trite character its due:
 VENTOSO blest beyond his hopes with health,
 With power, with honours, and with plenteous wealth,
 Plenteous in friends of course; his word, his sacred word,
 However unaccountably absurd,
 Becomes a law---his wit must sterling be,
 Tho' from the foul mouth of obscenity.

View him this hour, his tongue, his eye impart,
 The envied blessings of a happy heart;
 View him to-morrow---the gay dream is o'er,
 Health, power, and affluence, ye can please no more;
 Down sinks his heart,---Joy blooms not on his face,
 Care and desponding sorrow take their place:
 Haply from fortune's hand some wayward blow
 May strike his soul, and give him up to woe;

H

Some

Some dire distress his private peace may rend;
 Some damned treachery in his bosom friend---
 A faithless wife---or, Oh! that keener curse
 Of thankless children wring his heart---or worse;
 (If to the wretched fate itself can give
 To taste a worse calamity, and live)
 Perhaps----Ah no! the pang of such distress,
 Time might erase, or patience render less;
 VENTOSO's sad disease admits no cure;
 His only remedy is to endure:
 A sudden cloud o'erwhelms his brow---For why?
 A sudden cloud had first o'erwhelmed the sky:
 Lo, yon black storm comes lowering o'er his brain;
 What thinking head can such a load sustain?
 You smile contempt, my friend;-- that smile forbear;
 VENTOSO's temper is the atmosphere.
 To mend his health, at least to mend his breed;
 This day, so Fate or PHILLIS had decreed,
 VENTOSO shall the sweets of wedlock share;
 Now at the temple waits the blooming fair:
 He rose, he dress'd him with the dawning day,
 Looked blithe as HYMEN, for the sun looked gay;

But

But----“ Oh, these elements, and thou false wind,
 “ Shifting so oft, aside, before, behind,
 “ And boding now nor good to man, nor beast,
 “ Perverfely settled in the fatal east!
 “ Marry, or hang---VENTOSO cannot come :”
 He breaks his word; and stays to mope at home.

Not all these ills, of peace and plenty born,
 Which laugh demure philosophy to scorn,
 Which mock at art, nor yield to reason's laws,
 But make religion's sacred self to pause ;
 Not one disease, that rends the heart or head,
 By sloth begotten, or of luxury bred
 To tear each membrane, and distort each limb,
 Creates such anguish, as fantastick whim ;
 Parent of affectation, and false taste,
 Spleen ill-conceived, and benefit misplaced ;
 She, full of fancied ills, and fond of freak,
 Makes the weak wretched, and the wisest weak.

Ye Belles, that are, and ye, that would be brides,
 Oh, banish from your hearts these faithless guides ;

Drive

Drive them with all their bangles far away
 With *Fribbles* out of petticoats to play;
 Ye, whose exalted pleasure is to please,
 Shun affectation;----shun that foe to ease,
 That foe to elegance, whose foppery
 Baffles the brilliance of the brightest eye;
 Fools only are thus cheated; for the wise
 Look through the mask, and all its tricks despise:

Pant not for general sway;---the rules the best,
 Who conquers one, and makes one conquered best:
 Leave to *Coquettes* the graces of a day,
 And cherish those the most, which least decay;
 So, shall ye charm, when beauty charms no more;
 When reason rules, where passion ruled before:
 The flash of wit with judgment's finer flame;
 Shall innocently play, yet please the same:
 Eternal blessings on your steps attend,
 And friendship ever be the female friend;
 Unfading love shall grace your setting sun,
 And age maintain the conquests, youth had won.

SENSIBILITY

A

POETICAL EPISTLE

ADDRESSED TO

CHARLTON LEIGHTON, Esq;

By his obliged

and obedient Servant

S. JOHNSON.

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Will sensibility his ear incline
 To the soft voice of a fairer voice?
 That sensibility, whose many ways
 Mark all he does, embellish all he says,
 Beat in his eye, and breathe on every sense
 The strong emotions of benevolence.

How full some's pride in such small changes wrought;
 "Tis with such flattery, cries the caving tongue,
CHARLTON LEIGHTON, Esq;

WITH every grace, which walks the world with ease,
 And pleasures most, where most we wish to please;
 While every blessing on his step attends,
 And rapture warms the bosom of his friends;
 While foes, if foes to such desert there be,
 Deprived of envy, learn esteem with me;
 Say, will the friend of genius condescend,
 Without that claim, to let me call him friend?

Will
 And, if thou canst, suppose that generous sigh
 A
 Those

Will sensibility his ear incline
 Indulgent to so plain a song as mine?
 That sensibility, whose manly rays
 Mark all he does, embellish all he says,
 Beam in his eye, and breathe on every sense
 The strong emotions of benevolence.

“ Truce with such flattery !” cries the carping tongue,

“ How fulsome’s praise in such dull changes rung !”

Be hushed, thou churl, and know my soul disdains

The villain-trick, and all its servile chains :

Yet, let me, gracious heaven, without offence

Alive to reason, nor quite dead to sense,

When merit of high note attention draws,

And, while he strives to shun, extorts applause,

Tho’ it may raise a blush on merit’s cheek,

What my soul freely thinks, as freely speak.

Turn then, my LEIGHTON, turn thy piercing eye,

And, if thou canst, suppress that generous sigh,

Those

Those ardors, which to life's remotest end
 Warm the kind breast of human nature's friend,
 When in oblivion's shade superior worth,
 By chilling want is blighted in the birth;
 Or born, its charms through prejudice decried,
 By envy blasted, are borne down by pride.

Oft hath the gem, that might enrich a throne,
 Slept unobserved, or all unpolished shone;
 As oft been far from bounty's flowing tide
 Thrown by the hand of ignorance aside.

Full oft hath genius in these polished days
 Far from the world, and all its tinsel blaze,
 Reclined beneath rusticity's low shed,
 From praise, from envy free, his graceful head;
 In sorrow's shade indulged the plaintive tone;
 Wept with distress for errors not his own;
 Felt the fell pang, that wounds the generous mind
 From unrelenting hate, or love unkind:

Or, (Oh, may some congenial hand be found
 To shield his bosom from so keen a wound)
 Into the depth of slavery plunged at once,
 Tied to a stake, been worried by a dunce,
 Condemned for trifling gain to labour more
 Than any wretch, that's sentenced to the bar,
 In those vile trammels, which extinguish sense,
 But give to fools their foolish consequence;
 By solemn pedantry forbid to stray
 Where kind imagination leads the way;
 Where science, lovely maid, unfolds her charms;
 Wooes him enamoured to her blissful arms;
 A short excursion scarce allowed to try
 Along the primrose-path of poetry,
 And Oh! to make that misery complete,
 Even hope denied, whose tyrannical voice may cheat
 The present hour, and bid contentment give
 Those joys, which haply but in fancy live!
 A portion large of cold neglect to know,
 Which mocks the tear, unkindness bids to flow,

And

And cursed with all those feelings of the mind;
That make neglect more poignantly unkind;
To bear the frown of pride, or tamely feel
The insulting stroke of Mammon's callous heel;
Beneath the crushing hand of power to lie,
That knows no merit, if in misery.

These, and a thousand evils worse than these;
Which, but to think on, make the bosom freeze
With horror, or with indignation flame,
That infamy, like this, should wear the name
Of man, when brutes themselves, if brutes could see
Such baseness, would abhor society.

Thou man of reason, (if 'tis reason) say
What dear delight to walk the milky way
Of apathy; unmoved to look upon
Rancour undoing, innocence undone;
Content for life through dulness path to creep,
And in oblivion with her sons to sleep:

B

Untouched

Untouched, if freedom's sacred isle, and all
 It's glories into quick perdition fall:
 Who darest not one good deed --- Yet proud --- for why?
 His dastard spirit never slept awry;
 Proud, ye just heavens, can manhood bear to see
 His shadow swell with mere nonentity!

It was not so, when virtue's hallowed flame
 Poured all its splendour on the Roman name;
 When manly sense by manly passion fired,
 Discharged the debt, that honours' voice required;
 Bravely took arms the lust of power to quell;
 With SCIPIO conquered, or with BRUTUS fell.

Nor was it so in good king DAVID's days;
 The man, who merited his maker's praise;
 Large were his virtues, nor his errors small;
 But when he fell, contrition marked his fall:
 Strong was the bias of his royal soul
 To nature's touch, above all tame controul;

Conscience

Conscience his faithful monitor, or guide,
His virtues triumphed, his demerits died.

With insect-tribes these lower regions swarm,
That do no good, content to do no harm,
Spread the light wing in inoffensive play;
And buz the trifle of their lives away:
To such, no matter what degree of worth,
Or worthlessness, grace, or disgrace this earth:
Tho' folly spread her branch, tho' baseness bend
Beneath that fruit, which draws the sun-shine friend,
Alike they gaze on all, alike they sleep,
Tho' science wither, and tho' virtue weep;
Callous for ever must their bosoms be
To the soft hand of sensibility.

Yet, there are those among the sons of men,
(The strange example rises now and then
To publick view) who feel sincerer joy
To cherish merit's blossom, than destroy;

In

In virtue so unfashionable grown,
 To do by stealth, what virtue must not own;
 For, all too good and wise, the world would stare,
 If genius should be competency's heir;
 Set by the gracious hand of bounty free,
 Should comfort view no more in theory;
 Long used to care, and long inured to find
 That hope is treacherous,—if the active mind
 Leap from restraint to rove at large in space,
 Or soft repose her in the arms of peace;
 When self, of selfishness divested seen,
 Views what is now, looks back on what has been,
 Forgets not hapless genius to deplore,
 That bears those shackles, he so lately bore;
 When ---- (Oh, what pleasure hath the idea lent!)
 Cares all at rest, and every wish content,
 On gratitude's swift wing the prayer ascends,
 Invoking blessings on the best of friends,
 Who bade declining life taste new delight,
 Her yoke made easy, and her burden light.

See

See the young bard, (exceptions made in time
 To modern manufacturers of rhyme.)
 Snatched by the muse, his generous bosom glows
 With song sublime, his rapid pen o'erflows
 With ardour unrestrained, thought springs from thought,
 Verse flames --- by quick enthusiasm caught,
 Taste listening rises, as the raptures rise,
 While envy faints, and dulness shuts his eyes.

Yes, there are men, and those of no mean cast,
 At least in the world's eye for such have past,
 Who, wrapt in blest stupidity, can view
 With equal coolness, tho' a RAPHAEL drew,
 And filled with magick hand the living line,
 A son of God, or--bear upon a sign.

Quite undisturbed, tho' with an angel's tongue
 And all it's powers, the bar or pulpit rung;
 So far is sterling worth above their reach,
 Cold, tho' a DUNNING plead, a NEWLING preach.

Composing draughts of opiate sweet they take,
 And gape, if giddy fools, like me, awake
 Should laugh with ANSTEY, or with nature learn
 To drop affection's tear upon her STERNE;
 Should, all dissolved by RICHARDSON'S address,
 Give up their souls to love and tenderness;
 Can view unfired a CHURCHILL'S flaming line,
 Throw dirt at LLOYD'S, and downright sleep o'er mine.

Others, sagacious souls, are well aware,
 What wisdom whispers of the bees and bear;
 Proud of their competence of feeling, find
 Where honey is, a sting may lurk behind.

"Is he an artist? Give him no offence;
 "Tremble to think on HOGARTH'S hateful sense,
 "Which bade a whim-struck world (seduced by gold)
 "ENGLAND'S distorted patriot behold;
 "Lugged into view----Lord bless us! see his ears;
 "Why, what a Devil FORTY-FIVE appears!

"Happy,

" Happy, that some such hand in cruel scorn

" Does not as much for worthy Parson HORNE !"

But, above all, they fly with strange dismay

The youth, who carols to the moon his lay ;

And inoffensive, as the song he loves,

In PRIOR's jingling cage enraptured moves.

" Oh, he's a horrid dog ! his hand unswayed

" By honour, is by interest soon betrayed ;

" Religion rules not such a wretch as this ;

" Verse his devotion, satire his soul's bliss :

" He dreads no devil but the critick's rod ;

" And for a right good jest insults his God.

" Observe his eye---a single glance looks through

" Spite of our antient wisdom, me and you :

" Shun all connexion---Ay, his presence flee ;

" Or, your poor murdered name expect to see

" Swing on a gibbet, if he's so inclined,

" Tainting the air, and whistling to the wind."

Diverting

Diverting fool!--The Ladies deem not so;
The hand of harmony full well they know
Gives strength to merit, and a glowing grace
To the soft impulse of the finest face.

Ye sons of verse, that all indignant view
The hateful portrait, Bavius' pencil drew,
Know but yourselves ---- Vice, as of old, shall bow
To every muse, disrobed of homage now!

It was not thus, when old TIRREUS' strains
Sent the fierce warrior to the embattled plains;
Poured in his breast the martial rage of song,
Rouzed his rough heart, his nervous arm new-strung.

Nor was it thus in good King DAVID's days,
Who to the monarch's, joined the scholar's praise;
Skilled, like his Prussian brother, or to wield
The poet's pencil, or the soldier's shield;
Save that in this the Jewish hero shone,
His God was honoured, when the work was done.

When

When satire's justified, deep sinks the stain,
 Black as GENOVA, ever to remain;
 But, when he aims at merit's heart the wound,
 His poisoned shaft falls blunted on the ground;
 Or, quick recoiling to his own again,
 Marks the safe satirist the worst of Men.

Not so, when fell oppression walks the streets,
 Past all control, save what oppression meets,
 When honest patriots deign to step aside,
 And pluck the vizor from the front of pride.

Not so, when avarice smarts beneath the stroke
 Of poignant ridicule, the flaring joke
 Of irony, or satire's sharpened tooth,
 More deeply wounding with the weight of truth:
 To heaven he lifts his hands, and thanks his stars,
 His gracious boy ne'er failed to say his prayers;
 Ne'er, warped by truant genius, seen to stray
 From the calm tenor of his golden way,

Missed an occasion (what exalted sense!)
To spurn at freedom, and to pick up pence.

O avarice, thou fiend, that, under show
Of honour's friend, art honour's basest foe;
That, but to starve the body, damnest the soul,
Far, far from me be thine abhorred control!

Joy of my happier days, and sole delight,
When sorrow wrapt me in her veil of night,
Thou, lovely muse, the balm of all my care,
Hear me this once, nor fear another prayer:

- " If my attachment to thy sacred self,
- " If my contempt and negligence of self
- " Merit those ills, which much too often fall
- " Where taste is high, and worldly wisdom small,
- " Load me, if such thy will, with any pains
- " But those, which conscience feels, when avarice stains!
- " Hence with the ghastly phantom from my view!
- " If ought I have done, or shall hereafter do,

bohim

" May

" May justify the hand of violence
 " To wound unsparing my soul's better sense;
 " If, in the refuse of mankind, a foe
 " Malignant lurk, to whom the stab of woe
 " Plunged in my heart, I would yield all my sense's ease;
 " Whom, should I strive, my nature cannot please;
 " If real or imaginary wrong
 " Extend his arm, or point his peevish tongue;
 " If he, envenomed with some simple verse,
 " In bitterness of spirit frame a curse,
 " Which prudence will not, conscience dare not name;
 " Blacker than pain, or penury, or shame,
 " Forth let it come, my breast shall meet the blow,
 " And if it be deserved, confess it so;
 " But never, never let my hand withhold
 " For filthy lucre's sake, another's gold. "

I prayed --- when straight this fine poetick prayer
 The laughing muse dispersed in empty air;

High

High as she mounted on the changeable bow,
 Left me to gaze in stupid trance below;
 Bade me reflect on blessings I had gained
 From bounty's hand, without desert obtained;
 On patience lightly touched, and sweet content;
 Then, smiling heavenly gracious, as she went,
 Said something of a friend, but that I lost,
 On hope's exalted throne remotely tost.

"If he, enveloped with some simple veil,
 In bitterness of spirit flames a coal,
 Which prudence will not conscience dare not name;
 Blacker than pain, or penny, or shame,
 Forth let it come, my breast shall meet the blow;
 And if it be devalued, 'tis no loss;
 But never, never let my hand withhold
 For filthy lucre's sake, another's gold."

I prayed--when straight this fine poetick prayer
 The laughing muse dispersed in empty air;

High